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**OPERATIONAL DESIGN IN COUNTERDRUG OPERATIONS IN THE
CARIBBEAN: AN ANALYSIS**

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

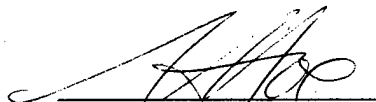
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ABSTRACT

DOD is tasked to support the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) by providing assets for Detection and Monitoring (D&M) operations worldwide. However, D&M efforts have been primarily focused on the Andean region and the Caribbean Basin. The services' force structure and interagency "turf battles" have always limited the scope of operations. Operational success has been elusive while military operating dollars, assets, and personnel bear the brunt of what is arguably a law enforcement action. New concepts of operations are being developed that should be analyzed from the operational art perspective to see if they flow from and can satisfy National Strategy.

This paper provides a summary of the origins of DOD involvement in the war on drugs and what the military's primary contribution is. From this background, the paper explores how counterdrug (CD) operational design builds on National-level guidance to combat the flow of drugs in the Transit and Source zones. The principal elements of operational design, discernible from open source literature, are analyzed with emphasis on maritime and air interdiction CD operations in the Transit Zone. The paper finishes by comparing the deduced operational scheme to the operational concept of Campaign STEEL WEB.

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I. BACKGROUND

Legal Basis for DOD involvement in the War on Drugs

The drug culture of the 1960s gave rise to a rapid growth of drug related crime during the 1970s. By the end of that decade the drug problem had become politically untenable; Washington moved quickly after the 1980 elections to reassure civil society by acting swiftly and boldly to eradicate the scourge of drugs from the streets of America.

A series of National Security Decision Directives and acts of congress throughout the 1980s incrementally drew the Department of Defense (DOD) into what President Reagan termed a "War on Drugs¹." Department of Defense involvement in the counterdrug (CD) effort in fact dates back to 1981. Congress enacted law² that year that effectively amended the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 (18 USC 1385) to allow the military services to collaborate with civilian Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) officials. However, Posse Comitatus restrictions on law enforcement activities by military members remained in effect.

Executive powers to combat drug trafficking increased not only in DOD, but also across the full spectrum of LEAs. By the mid-1980s the number of agencies involved required the centralization of planning and policy development to ensure effective use of unique military capabilities in support of CD operations. The National Drug Policy Board (NDPB) was created in 1987 with limited powers to coordinate military support. The NDPB was replaced a year later by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). The Director, ONDCP, with the prestige and power of his cabinet-level position, was tasked to unify the efforts of the myriad agencies involved in the CD effort

by creating and coordinating National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS)³. The first NDCS was published in 1989 and is updated yearly.

DOD's Primary Mission: Detection and Monitoring

DOD's role in the National Drug Control Strategy was further defined and expanded in 1989. Prior to that year's Defense Authorization Act, DOD CD support to LEAs was conducted on an Ad hoc basis by the individual services. Most support was limited to training and equipment loans; direct support missions such as embarkation of Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETs) were on a not-to-interfere with military training basis. The Defense Appropriations Act language (later permanent law 10 USC 124) assigned DOD as the lead federal agency for Detection and Monitoring (D&M) of illegal drug shipments into the United States⁴. The expanded DOD role centralized National-Strategic coordination of CD operations at the SECDEF/CJCS level and directed the execution of the mission to the major CD combatant commanders⁵ and to Commander in Chief, North American Aerospace Defense Command (CINCNORAD).

Detection and Monitoring is part of a complex interagency process focused on stopping the flow of illegal drugs through three geographic regions. These regions are the Source Zone, the Transit Zone, and the Arrival Zone. The Source zone comprises any country or region where drugs originate; the Transit zone encompasses the Caribbean and the eastern Pacific; and the Arrival zone is the continental United States' borders, ports and airfields. For the purposes of this paper the Source Zone is defined as the region comprised by Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru. Over 90 percent of cocaine and heroin shipments to the U.S. originate in these Andean Ridge countries. The Transit zone means

the Caribbean, through which 57 percent (see Appendix A) of cocaine and heroin destined for American streets travels. The author does not intend to minimize or ignore the significance of eastern Pacific trafficking which accounts for 27 percent of contraband to the U.S. However, fiscal and geographic realities have severely constrained DOD CD efforts in that area; focusing on the Caribbean does not in any way detract from the analysis to be conducted.

D&M operations support the interdiction efforts of various federal and host nation LEAs. In the Transit zone, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is the principal agency for Maritime Interdiction and shares responsibility with the U.S Customs Service (USCS) for Air Interdiction. D&M is the first of five steps in the drug interdiction process. DOD assets provide initial detection and tracking of the suspected smuggler (air or surface). Track information is analyzed through a process called Sorting that utilizes interagency information resources to determine origin and identity of the track. Once a track is determined to be "of interest" (suspected smuggler) DOD, USCG, or USCS assets move in to intercept, escort, make arrests and seize contraband. DOD assets and personnel are required by law to stand off from imminent hostilities and cannot make arrests, therefore, their role ends with a handover of the contact to LEAs for the "end-game."

National guidance, whether originating from administration policy or act of congress, has driven DOD's creation of organizations and development of techniques and procedures to support CD operations. Changes in policy over the years have impacted funding, operational tempo and available infrastructure, but the threat and the nature of DOD's mission in the Transit zone have remained constant. Having defined DOD's role in CD operations, this paper will now explore how CD operational design builds on

National-level guidance to combat the flow of drugs in the Transit zone. The principal elements of operational design, discernible from open source literature, will be analyzed with emphasis on maritime and air interdiction CD operations in the Transit Zone.

II. OPERATIONAL DESIGN

"...the threat posed by drug trafficking is an ambush in the path toward achieving our national objectives⁶."

GEN Charles E. Wilhelm, USMC

From National Guidance to Operational Scheme

The principal elements of National guidance, Goals, Resources, and Limitations on freedom of action should help the commander to clearly define his military mission. Guidance for CD operations is found in national strategy documents that by their nature are very broad and, when addressing the drug problem in particular, sometimes vague.

Goals should define victory. The National Security Strategy (NSS) published in 1997 places drug trafficking in the same category as terrorism -- a transnational threat with grave consequences for American society if left unchecked. The NSS places a high priority on domestic intervention to reduce demand through education, treatment and law enforcement. It elaborates on a two-pronged approach; at home, it proposes to reduce the drug-abuse-related costs to society (crime and other social problems) and to shield America's borders from drug smuggling. Abroad, it seeks partnerships with source and

transit zone nations to "reduce cultivation of drug producing crops, [and] interdict the flow of drugs⁷" into the United States.

The counterdrug strategy converges with national concerns towards the Western Hemisphere. This area includes the source and transit zones where most of the drugs consumed in the U.S. originate. The NSS calls for the elimination of drug trafficking in this area and the accompanying crime and corruption which threaten the sovereignty and democracy of these nations. These goals are intertwined and very broad. The victory condition derived from the NSS is one where all drug production and smuggling, and all the social costs associated, are eliminated; a very daunting task.

The National Military Strategy (NMS), derived from the NSS, provides strategic direction to America's armed forces. This document acknowledges drug smuggling as a threat and provides guidance on how to use peacetime military engagement to shape the regional environment. NMS, however, does not directly address national aims that might help the planner to discern a definition of victory in the drug war.

The military planner looking for a clear definition of victory in the NSS or NMS is left dissatisfied at this juncture. These documents only provide a broad picture of the strategy's emphasis -- 1. Demand reduction, 2. Source country intervention and, 3. Transit zone interdiction. There is little the military can do for demand reduction at home except to set the example for society by policing its own ranks and maintaining a drug-free organization. For supply reduction, on the other hand, interdicting the flow of drugs and employing peacetime engagement are legitimate military missions. Clear goals and a definition of victory, while not found in the NSS or NMS may be found elsewhere.

The paucity of specifics found in the NSS and NMS with respect to the CD effort is due to the power given by congress to the Director, ONDCP, to create and coordinate national level drug control strategy. The NDCS follows the general priorities set in the NSS (1. Demand reduction, 2. Source country intervention and, 3. Transit zone interdiction) and sets strategic goals that cover the spectrum of agencies and jurisdictions in the CD effort. Table 1 lists the five strategic goals of the NDCS. Only Goals four and five apply to DOD, these are the Strategic Objectives the CD commander must achieve.

TABLE 1

NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGIC GOALS⁸

1. Educate and enable America's youth to reject illegal drugs as well as the use of alcohol and tobacco.
2. Increase the safety of America's citizens by substantially reducing drug-related crime and violence.
3. Reduce the health and social costs to the public of illegal drug use.
4. **Shield America's air, land, and sea frontiers from the drug threat.**
5. **Break foreign and domestic drug sources of supply.**

The Aim of national guidance as it applies to the CD combatant commanders may now be summarized as follows:

United States military forces will support drug LEAs with intelligence, equipment, training, and personnel, in order to stop the cultivation of drug producing crops in the source zone and stop the flow of drugs in the transit zone.

This statement, derived from analysis of the three major national strategy documents, still does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question "What is the definition of victory in the war on drugs?"

Perhaps such a definition does not exist in conventional military terms. The Director, ONDCP has stated⁹ that the CD effort should not be thought of as a war, but as a process akin to treating a medical condition that requires constant care in order to remain in remission. The military, in essence, has been committed for the long-term support of these operations. Since a definition of victory in the military sense is elusive in the context of CD operations, commanders and their planners must educate their subordinates to work within this paradigm. This education can be critical to the morale of the troops in the field who are trained to achieve tangible objectives; the kind that are not easily achieved when supporting police actions.

Finite Resources for a Long-term Commitment. The next element of guidance addresses the forces assigned to accomplish the aims of the strategy and the space and time factors these forces must operate in.

Supply reduction took a back seat to Demand reduction through the early 1990's as emphasis in the CD effort changed. D&M efforts saw a significant reduction in funding and level of effort as the military and many federal LEAs downsized. CD commanders were forced to consolidate their assets and search for new ways to accomplish the mission. They could no longer rely on massive flying and steaming hours,¹⁰ large overseas bases, and extensive radar networks to interdict smugglers. Since 1996 the trend has been to hold the number of forces assigned to the transit zone at constant levels while improving command and control (C2), and Information Operations (IO) networks. New operational strategies have evolved that call for intelligence cueing, innovative uses of detection technologies, and extensive use of information networks. The implication for the military planner is that the Transit and Source zones will be

economy-of-force areas of operations (AO). The challenge for the planner is how to best deploy limited assets in the vast (over six million square miles) Transit zone maritime AO. Forces will have to be joint and work closely with transit zone nations, and with LEAs with jurisdiction in the AO.

The smuggler has always had the initiative in the transit zone. His innovation and flexibility have up to now outmaneuvered the myriad agencies involved in the CD effort. The NDCS stipulates that the key to success will be flexibility. The forces (DOD, USCG, USCS, and local LEAs) will move quickly to where the threat is, massing CD units until the threat subsides and moving on to the next high-threat area. Agile, closely coordinated and synchronized forces should be able to take the initiative from the trafficker and force him to less profitable *modus operandi*. This strategy can prove very effective if properly executed. Not surprisingly, the strategy calls for leaving substantial residual forces in place after each of these operations. This approach, while tactically sound, risks over-extending available forces in the near term, and may prove unsustainable in the long term.

Restraints and Constraints. Finally, guidance provides limits to the commander's freedom of action. The NDCS, although not directly addressing limitations to the military's involvement, states it seeks to "control this cancer (drugs) without compromising American ideals¹¹." The role of the military is limited to that authorized by law and the commander must ensure his subordinates adhere to these tenets with zeal.

After analysis of the principal elements (goals, resources and limits), a more complete re-statement of guidance to the CD commander is possible:

Designated CD commanders will use the minimum required military forces and capabilities, as prescribed by law, in support of U.S. LEAs and regional nations. Forces will be committed for the long term in order to stop the cultivation of drug producing crops in the source zone, and stop the flow of drugs in the transit zone.

Strategic Objectives

The five strategic goals and their thirty-two supporting objectives¹² were designed to guide the creation of efficient plans to achieve success in eradicating the scourge of drugs. The NDCS however, drew criticism from the Government Accounting Office¹³ and congress for failing to state these goals in quantifiable terms. The 1998 revision to the NDCS corrected these shortcomings to some extent by including numerical objectives and commencing a process to create quantifiable measures of effectiveness. It is this author's view that another shortcoming of the strategy that has not been addressed is in the concurrent pursuit of multiple strategic objectives with very limited resources.

If fully implemented, the 1998 NDCS is expected to reduce domestic availability of illegal drugs by 25 percent by the year 2002 and by 50 percent by the year 2007¹⁴. In addition, Key Drug Control Performance Measures¹⁵ (Table 2) associated to individual strategic goals support these quantifiable objectives. The performance measures assigned to goals four and five provide the military planner with well-defined and measurable strategic objectives that may be used to develop courses of actions to achieve the Desired End State.

TABLE 2
KEY DRUG CONTROL PERFORMANCE MEASURES¹⁶

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE
Reduce the Rate of Shipment of Illicit Drugs From Source Zones (Supports Goal 5)	15% by 2002 30% by 2007
Reduce the Rate of Illicit Drug Flow Through the Transit and Arrival Zones (Supports Goal 4)	10% by 2002 20% by 2007

Desired End State. Assuming that the risk of pursuing multiple strategic objectives is acceptable in the case of supply reduction, the planner can devise campaign plans focused on the given mid and long-term objectives at Table 2. Meeting these objectives should yield the economic, political and military conditions required by the two-pronged (At home and Abroad) approach described in the NSS and NDCS.

The strategy requires campaigns with properly sequenced operations over ten years to increase the take of interdiction operations by the given percentages. At first glance this appears to be a straightforward math problem - "X" amount was seized by applying "Y" numbers of forces, therefore a number "Z" of additional forces should yield the required increase in seizures to meet the objectives. In fact, this approach would be flawed not only because of the non-linear nature of drug smuggling operations, but because the numerical objectives of the strategy are based on assumptions and estimates. The NDCS acknowledges the need to adjust objectives over the life of the strategy as improved data on drug cultivation and production allows. Therefore, strategic objectives

will be fluid and the Desired End State will not be defined by a static set of conditions but by political, military and economic trends.

Political Trends. Peace, prosperity, and strong democratic institutions are the key goals of our national strategy vis-a-vis the Western Hemisphere. Drug trafficking, as eloquently phrased by USCINCSO, lays in ambush of those objectives. Desirable trends in the political arena would include the decline of narco-insurgency, and the rise of freely elected regional governments with strong independent judiciaries. Additionally, strong bilateral and multilateral agreements would be in place to aggressively prosecute CD operations through territorial seas and airspace. At home in the U.S., welcome trends would include an increase in the social stigma placed on drug abuse, older first use age (age when a person first uses illicit drugs), and continued support at the local, state and federal level for aggressive CD operations.

Military Trends. In this arena trends should lean towards stable U.S. force levels capable of effectively and efficiently surging in response to the threat. More efficient D&M support and new-technology insertions should allow LEAs to increase seizures and arrests in the transit zone. Regional military and police forces should become more professional and less vulnerable to co-option by narco-terrorists or traffickers.

Economic Trends. The impact of CD operations on the retail price of drugs has been looked at as a key measure of success or failure. Seizures in the transit zone however, have been assessed in the past to be just the "cost of doing business"¹⁷ for drug smugglers. As supply dwindles, trends in this area should be

towards increased street cost of drugs in the U.S. initially, followed by a rapid drop as demand subsides. Reduced drug sales on the streets will translate to reduced profitability of drug producing crops in the source zone. This will facilitate the migration of peasant farmers to more profitable, legal crops.

Developing an Operational Scheme for the Transit Zone

The Trafficker's Center of Gravity. The operational planner must by necessity identify the enemy critical strengths and weaknesses. Without a clear idea of what these are it is impossible to apply military force with any hope of success. In CD operations in the transit and source zones the planner's job of finding these critical points is complicated by the traffickers' lack of homogeneity. Diverse operational modes, fluid organizational structures, and the porosity of international borders, conspire to make identification of a narco-trafficking strategic center of gravity (COG) almost impossible. Over the years various strategic COGs have been identified and attacked with very limited success, for example, the arrest and extradition of Cali Cartel leaders was supposed to destroy their operations, but in fact new, more diverse cartels rose to take over the Cali Cartel business. Perhaps the mistake made in the past was to attack the identified COG directly rather than attacking critical vulnerabilities. This paper will not argue over the validity of past COG analysis but will look for critical weaknesses that may be exploited in the transit zone.

Critical Weaknesses. The vast transit zone AO forces the narco-trafficker to travel long distances exposed to surveillance by friendly forces. Theater and national means, as well as human intelligence collection can also monitor the points of

embarkation in South America. The type of vessels and aircraft used for maritime and air trafficking are well known and can be detected and tracked by current technology.

Cartels and other drug organizations don't work well where government works and judiciaries are strong. Additionally, drug profits can be tracked while being laundered through the complex international banking system.

Critical Strengths. Narco-trafficking cartels are networked organizations that rely on brutal discipline and pure greed for security¹⁸. Penetrating these organizations is very difficult, making human-source intelligence hard to come by. The profitability of the drug trade provides the trafficker with the ability to absorb the losses of aircraft and vessels as the cost of doing business. This money also allows them to purchase the best off-the-shelf technology available to improve their security and command and control. Further, money will buy people, undermining governments and judiciaries in regional nations by direct bribery or by funding insurgency. Cartels and other drug organizations work best where government does not work, or where judiciaries are weak.

The COG. Quick analysis of the critical factors listed shows that drug profits are the principal source of power for the narco-trafficker. As has been discussed before, the NDCS while predominantly a demand reduction strategy, implicitly and explicitly stipulates that narco-profits must be slashed. Take away the market and the profits dry up is a tried and true capitalist paradigm. However, reducing profitability by reducing demand on the street will by itself, not achieve the synergy required to topple the cartels. Profits must be attacked in source and transit zones as well.

Critical vulnerabilities to this strategic center of gravity are found in the IO realm (tracking bank transactions), and in the interdiction and peacetime engagement areas. In

the transit zone, DOD is better suited for employment in the latter two. Improved intelligence-cued interdiction operations can become very costly to the drug cartels in terms of lost platforms and contraband without increased friendly force structure. U.S. LEA and DOD presence in regional nations can strengthen governments and judiciaries, creating an environment hostile to the narco-trafficker. Loss of platforms, cargo and safe-haven will deny the narco-trafficker access to markets and ports of embarkation and force him to relocate operations. Narco-profits will suffer through the massed effects of CD operations in the transit and source zones, and demand reduction efforts in the continental United States.

Principles of MOOTW. Under current doctrine, counterdrug operations are grouped under the rubric of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). Like war, MOOTW has principles that must be applied to operations to increase the likelihood of success. These principles are Objective, Unity of Effort, Security, Restraint, Perseverance, and Legitimacy¹⁹.

The objective of the CD effort in the transit zone derives from the national strategic objectives (page 9) and the smugglers' critical weaknesses. It follows from the above discussion that the operational objective in the transit zone is to deny the smuggler profitability by effective interdiction. All operations must be focused and sequenced to achieve this objective.

Unity of Effort is a key component of the CD effort due to the myriad organizations involved in overlapping jurisdictions. Some have argued for Unity of Command²⁰ rather than just unity of effort. Little progress towards unity of command has been made on the civilian LEA arena, but DOD has been moving in that direction.

The latest example of streamlining D&M operations is the placing of all Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATF)²¹ in the transit and source zones under the command of SOUTHCOM. However, close coordination among all agencies to minimize duplication and enhance intelligence sharing remains the key to success. Establishing a Common Operational Picture (COP) must be a high priority of D&M commanders in order to support this coordination.

Security, Restraint and Perseverance are principles that permeate through all CD operations. Security of DOD forces is the purpose of restrictions placed on DOD participation by law and by other common sense force protection measures. Security also applies to controlling information and employing operational security (OPSEC) to avoid tipping off smugglers of impending operations. This last item is a serious challenge since CD operations are conducted from bases that are easily observed by cartel operatives. Restraint and Perseverance have been covered previously in this paper. DOD involvement is very limited by law so restraint in CD operations is mandated. Perseverance is the cornerstone of the NDCS. Clearly, a long-term strategy will require all participants to never give up the fight or give in to defeatism. Strong regional partnerships will result from unwavering commitment to the CD effort.

Finally, Legitimacy, the moral high ground that must never be ceded. DOD CD operations find legitimacy in their legal basis and in the fact that DOD is limited to a supporting role. The lead agencies for interdiction are Drug LEAs that, as agents of the U.S. civil government, do not present themselves as a threat to the sovereignty of regional nations. This improves cooperation and creates an environment conducive to the creation of bilateral and multilateral CD agreements in the transit and source zones. In

the final analysis, legitimacy may be as important to the effectiveness and sustainability of CD operations in the transit and source zones as the principle of objective is.

An Operational Scheme for the Transit Zone. This paper has deduced strategic guidance to the CD commander (page 9); it has studied critical factors; and it has identified a strategic COG and critical vulnerabilities that can be attacked. Further, analysis of the general principles of MOOTW provided clues to the proper application of force required to defeat drug smugglers (i.e. topple the COG). From the previous discussion a scheme or method for defeating the enemy that is based on national guidance may be derived.

The sector of main effort for purposes of this paper remains the transit zone and further clarification is not required. Application of combat power, or in the case of CD operations, D&M plus law enforcement (LE), must be focused on the seizure of smuggler assets and contraband in order to increase the cartel's cost of doing business (the objective). Operations must be designed to take the initiative away from the smuggler. Focused intelligence, timely cueing, and a seamless COP are critical areas where DOD assets can make a difference to ensure positive handover of targets of interest to LEAs for prosecution and successful "end-game." D&M assets must be deployed to maximize their effectiveness. Bilateral agreements must be made to expand the number of operating bases available to these assets, and grant the authority to transit territorial waters and airspace when conducting CD operations. The resulting shorter lines of operations will increase speed and responsiveness and will support a higher operational tempo. Bilateral agreements also deny safe haven to the smuggler. The deployment of mobile D&M assets must be coordinated at the theater level to coincide with major

operations. Ad hoc deployments, and deployments not directly supporting a major operation would stop, allowing for better asset management and some operational reserve. Once in theater, all D&M forces must be under a single commander supporting the major LE operation or operations. Operations must be fast paced and logically sequenced to concentrate forces at key chokepoints at the right time. Intelligence support will be critical in identifying the point in time when the operation has succeeded in disrupting smuggling so much that the cartels are forced to change routes or modes of transport. D&M commanders and LEA officials must be highly flexible and anticipate the smuggler's next move and be waiting for him when he gets there. When an operation ends, care must be taken not to leave conditions that may lure the smuggler back when the forces move on. A successful maritime interdiction campaign will eventually force smuggling operations from the Caribbean into the eastern Pacific and the Central American land bridge. This is a strategic move that can be anticipated and measures can be taken early to check it. Operations must be sequenced for this eventuality.

Implied in the above discussion is the factor time. The operations envisioned by this scheme span years of commitment in the AO. The level of intelligence required takes years to build, as does the required political arrangements and supporting infrastructure. Clearly, the planning process for operations against a multifaceted threat like drug trafficking does not lend itself to unilateral, short-term solutions. Success will be measured against the mid- and long-term Key Drug Control Performance Measures (Table 2) and evidence of the determinant trends of the Desired End State.

III. CONCLUSION

Do current operations meet the requirements of the NDCS?

Under the direction of retired army General Barry R. McCaffrey, ONDCP revamped the NDCS and refocused the CD effort on a long-term (ten years) strategy. DOD contributions to the CD effort however, continue disconnected from the strategy. Assets are deployed not in support of specific operations but to support the C2 structure for static LE operations that are largely unfocused, predictable and easily by-passed by the smuggler. Appendix A shows standing LE operations in the transit zone (OPBAT, CARIB SHIELD, LASER STRIKE, etc.). Most of these operations grew out of various LEA initiatives and exist independent of each other except for their concurrent dependency on DOD D&M assets for support. This unfocused demand on D&M assets prevents massing and maneuver, and is anathema to the strategy's call for quick refocusing of assets in response to nascent trafficking patterns. There is hope that within the next few years this situation will change. SOUTHCOM is now responsible for the transit and source zones and is in command of the JIATFs that support those areas. The concept of a single D&M commander is closer to reality now than in the past and should bring about a revitalized and refocused D&M effort aligned with the NDCS.

STEEL WEB. The U.S. Coast Guard has been on the forefront of change and has realigned its operations to meet NDCS requirements. Of particular note is the Coast Guard's multi-year Campaign STEEL WEB. The strategic concept, as described by the USCG's Commandant²², is "to deny drug smugglers access to maritime routes by a sequence of operations in which interdiction forces are concentrated in high-threat areas of [the transit zone] to disrupt drug traffic." STEEL WEB operations are focused on

attaining NDCS strategic goal number four - Shield America's Frontiers (Table 1). The first of these operations (FRONTIER SHIELD) was executed in 1997 and served as a proof of concept. Operational design follows the following four strategic cornerstones of the Coast Guard's campaign plan²³:

1. *Maintain a strong "defense in depth" interdiction presence in the transit zone.*

The multi-year sequence of operations envisioned by STEEL WEB directly addresses the basic requirements of the NDCS and the principle of perseverance. The defense in depth concept applies the principles of objective, and borrowing from the principles of war, mass and maneuver. FRONTIER SHIELD focused on the Puerto Rico-U.S. Virgin Islands drug corridor and massed assets in sufficient numbers and for a long enough period that drug smuggling operations were severely disrupted forcing the smugglers west. Appendix A shows that transit zone seizures went from 39 metric tons in 1996 to 85 metric tons in 1997 due in great measure to FRONTIER SHIELD. This operation continues today at a lower pace but forces remain in sufficient strength to prevent the return of smugglers. FRONTIER SHIELD was quickly followed by FRONTIER LANCE, which met the smuggler in a new threat area.

2. *Strengthen ties with transit zone nations.*

This second cornerstone derives from the mandate for peacetime engagement. As discussed earlier, bilateral agreements lend legitimacy to CD operations, deny safe-haven to the smuggler, and expand CD bases of operations. Operation FRONTIER LANCE, conducted in territorial seas of regional partners, has accomplished all of the above and has helped to bolster the effectiveness and interoperability of regional navy's.

3. *Support interagency efforts to combat drug smuggling.*

The interdiction effort suffers from a lack of unity of command. STEEL WEB operations are designed to exploit unity of effort by concentrating forces where they are needed. A level of unity of command at the tactical level is achieved by assigning Tactical Command of U.S. Navy ships (with LEDET embarked) to USCG tactical commanders. Additionally, Tactical Destroyer Squadrons (TACDESRON) made up of USCG, USN and allied ships are placed under the tactical command of a naval officer under USCG operational command.

4. *Promote reduction of drug abuse in the maritime environment.*

This fourth cornerstone does not directly impact interdiction efforts but follows the strategic concept of attacking drug abuse from the demand side as well as the supply. It supports the objective of demand reduction by creating a safe, drug-free environment for pleasure boating and commerce.

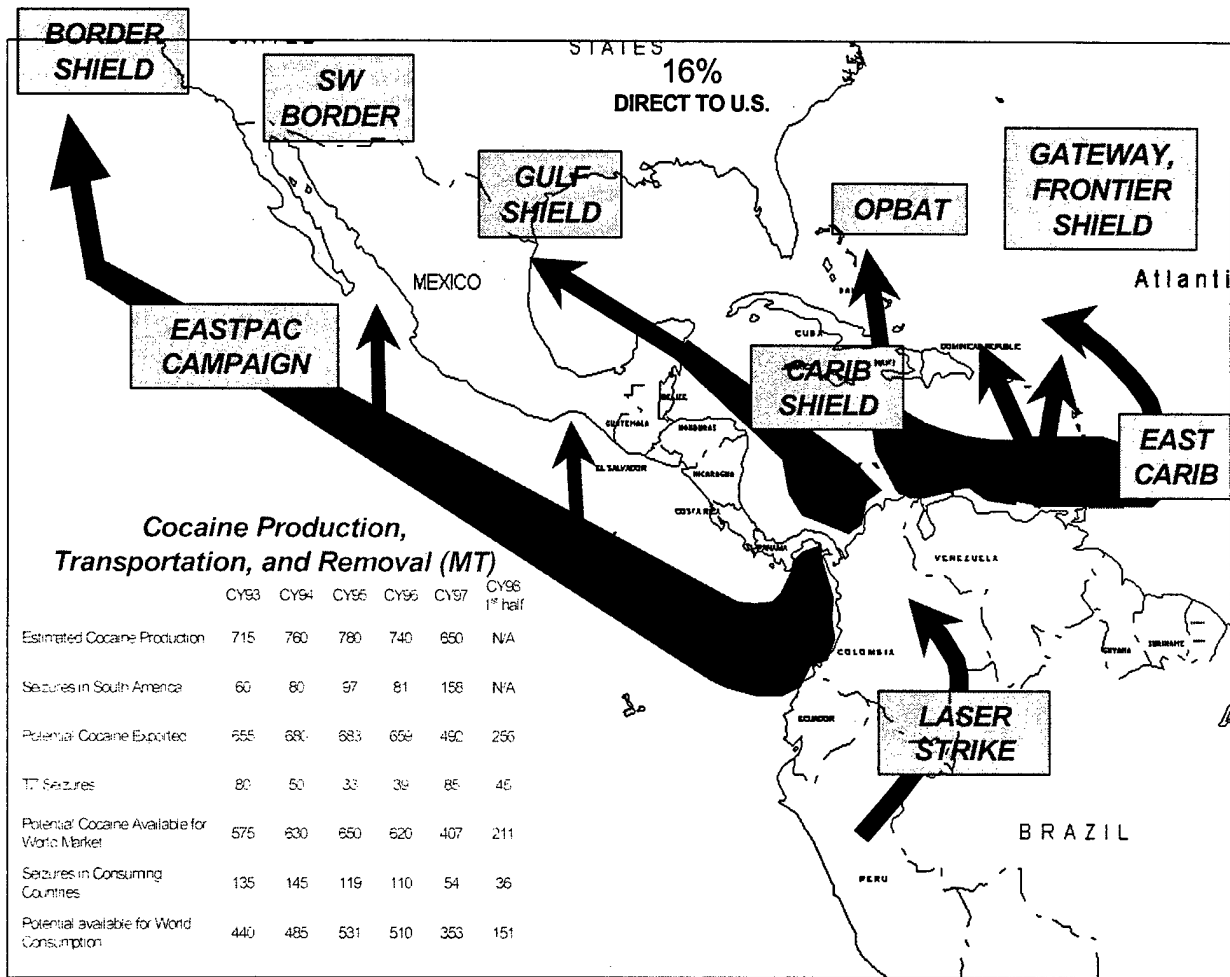
Campaign STEEL WEB captures the essential elements of the NDCS as deduced from the operational art analysis performed by this paper. It is focused on a single operational objective in support of national objectives, it manages limited resources and innovates to achieve mass at the right time, and it commits forces for the long-term and sequences operations to take the initiative away from the smuggler. Coast Guard planners have achieved a clear operational picture for meeting the objectives of the NDCS. However, the USCG is limited in the number of assets it can commit to these operations in the long-term. Expanding the force structure of the USCG may be the answer, but there also exists fertile ground in streamlining LEA command structures to

increase the forces available for maneuver. Finally, D&M efforts and operational planning must dovetail with STEEL WEB and similar LEA-led campaigns.

SOUTHCOM is uniquely positioned to achieve this with its newly acquired JIATFs. If however, CD organizations continue to pull in different directions, funds will continue to be wasted, CD efforts will lose legitimacy amid accusations of inefficiency, ineptitude and "rice-bowling," and the NDCS will fail to meet even its most humble objectives. We will have walked straight into the ambush USCINCSO has warned about.

APPENDIX A

COCAINE FLOW AND CD OPERATIONS²⁴



¹ In a speech at the Department of Justice in 1982. Hodges, Adele E, The Role of the United States Military in the Counterdrug Operations in the Year 2000 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1997), 21.

² General Military Law, U.S. Code, Title 10--Armed Forces, Ch. 18, secs. 371-378 (1981).

³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Counterdrug Operations (Joint Pub 3-07.4) (Washington, D.C.: 17 February 1998) I-2.

⁴ Ibid. I-9.

⁵ Ibid. I-17. Commanders in Chief, U.S. Southern Command (USCINCSO), U.S. Atlantic Command (CINCUSACOM) and U.S. Pacific Command (USCINCPAC). The command and control structure in place today was not specifically mandated in any law or act, but has evolved from reviews of the mission assigned to DOD and changes to the Unified Command Plan (UCP).

⁶ Gen Charles E. Wilhelm, USMC, "Statement," U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Assessment of U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility, Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, 105th Cong, 2nd sess, 5 March 1998, 16.

⁷ A National Security Strategy for a New Century, The White House, May 1997, 10.

⁸ "Statement by General Barry R. McCaffrey," Statement by General Barry R. McCaffrey, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy before the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, Subcommittee on National Security, International Affairs, and Criminal Justice, 28 February 1997, <<http://204.36.65.7/ondcp/products/press/barrys.html>> (8 January 1999), 4.

⁹ Ibid, page 13.

¹⁰ James R. McDonough, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Drug Control Policy and Drug Interdiction, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 105th Cong, 2nd sess, 10 June 1998, 5.

¹¹ The National Drug Control Strategy, 1998, The White House, 1998, 3.

¹² Ibid, page 42a.

¹³ U.S. General Accounting Office, Drug Control: Update on U.S Interdiction Efforts in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific, Report to Congressional Requesters, Washington: 1997, 27-29.

¹⁴ James R. McDonough, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Drug Control Policy and Drug Interdiction, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 105th Cong, 2nd sess, 10 June 1998, 1.

¹⁵ The National Drug Control Strategy, 1998, The White House, 1998, 23.

¹⁶ Ibid, Partial list.

¹⁷ James R. McDonough, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Drug Control Policy and Drug Interdiction, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 105th Cong, 2nd sess, 10 June 1998, 4.

¹⁸ Berger, Alexander, Organizational Innovation and Redesign in the Information Age: The Drug War, NETWAR, and Other Lower-End Conflict, (Monterey, CA, Naval Postgraduate School), 1998, 59-102.

¹⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War (Joint Pub 3-07) (Washington, D.C.: 16 June 1995) II-2.

²⁰ W.M. Mendel and M.D. Munger, "The Drug Threat: Getting Priorities Straight," Parameters, Vol. XXVII, no. 2, Summer 1997, 120-123.

²¹ Joint Pub 3-07.4, VI-4 - VI-12. The JIATFs are geographically oriented CD organizations that coordinate DOD D&M assets and command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) support for law enforcement. JIATF-South and JIATF-East are responsible for the Andean Ridge and the Caribbean and eastern Pacific respectively. The 1997 UCP review brought both of these under SOUTHCOM COCOM.

²² ADM James M. Loy, USCG, "Statement," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Coast Guard Drug Interdiction Strategy, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, 105th Cong, 2nd sess, 29 September 1998. 2

²³ The National Drug Control Strategy, 1998: Budget Summary, The White House, 1998, 166.

²⁴ CDR Tom Hale, USCG, "Inter-American War Game 98, Maritime Drug Operations," Brief, Naval Warfare Development Command, U. S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: October 1998.

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